



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0437-2006, **Version:** *

Res. No. 437

Resolution calling on the United States Congress to amend the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 to allow tolls to be collected from both eastbound and westbound vehicles on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

By Council Member Yassky

Whereas, The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge opened in 1964 as a useful vehicular crossing between Staten Island and Brooklyn; and

Whereas, The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge is a part of a major interstate highway system, Interstate 278, which provides the shortest route between the middle Atlantic states and Long Island; and

Whereas, According to an April 2006 report from the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA), 70 million vehicles crossed the Verrazano-Narrows bridge in 2005, making this bridge the most frequently used crossing under the jurisdiction of the TBTA; and

Whereas, In 1986, federal legislation was passed by the United States Congress eliminating toll collection from vehicles traveling eastbound on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and allowing for the full toll to be collected in the westbound direction, in response to complaints that the eastbound traffic congestion caused by toll collection in that direction was negatively affecting Staten Island's air quality and traffic conditions; and

Whereas, The same federal legislation also stated that an environmental study would be required to change the toll collection process back to a two-way system; and

Whereas, A 1987 study completed by the State found that the one-way toll would lead to increases in traffic and pollution in Brooklyn and Manhattan; and

Whereas, In 1995, Congress passed the National Highway System Designation Act, which permanently

extended the one-way toll measure on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge; and

Whereas, According to a January 16, 2006 Gotham Gazette Article, critics consider the one-way toll on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge one of the most congestion aggravating policies ever devised; and

Whereas, Transportation Alternatives indicate that westbound vehicles frequently attempt to avoid the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge toll by detouring along the Gowanus Expressway and through the crowded city streets of lower Manhattan in order to take the Holland Tunnel free into New Jersey; and

Whereas, According to advocates, the heavy westbound traffic avoiding the high one-way toll on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge is causing congestion, safety and air quality concerns in Brooklyn and Manhattan; and

Whereas, The toll should be collected in both eastbound and westbound directions, in the amount of \$4.50 in each direction; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to amend the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 to allow tolls to be collected from both eastbound and westbound vehicles on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

SO
LS #759
6/27/06